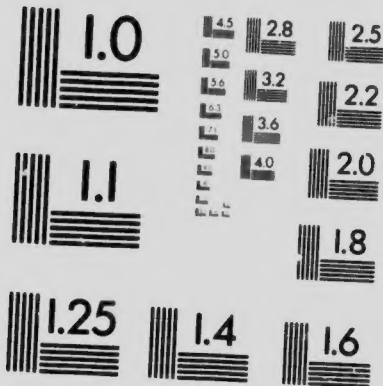


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VIVETTE



— BY —

CAPT. GROVER

Late of 1st Batt. C.E.F.

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PUBLISHED BY
THE COMOX ARGUS CO.
COURTENAY, B. C.

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FOREWORD

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind is indebted to the author of this little volume for the kindly spirit that prompted his offer to share with us any profit that may be realized.

"Vivette" is a striking story, and we trust those that read it may realize that in a small way they are contributing to the success of the work which is now being carried on in behalf of Canada's adult blind.

*E. F. Lambert,
Secretary*

*36, King Street, East,
Toronto, Ont.*

December 8th, 1919

VIVETTE

CHAPTER I.

The Brand of the Owl.

On a day approximately nine years before the first gun of "The World War," the rising sun gave warmth to a bundle on the door-step of an Orphan Asylum in one of the "Eastern States."

From the bundle came the wail of a babe cast aside by the knaves responsible for its birth.

A servant found the bundle, took it to the Matron, who unwrapped it and placed her hands over her eyes to shut out the vision of the object disclosed, the frightened servant running from the room.

The babe's chest was shaped like an inverted V, its back was humped, the scrawny lower limbs bowed, and as if to brand the maltreated being a thing of the night an owl was birth-marked in vivid red on the "chicken-breast."

The babe lived, growth in meagre measure came to the deformed frame, while intelligence, unkindly perhaps, came to the well shaped head.

Shunned by all, deprived of the love and affections dear to childhood, the deserted one became morose, ever seeking seclusion.

While the other orphans played their out-of-door games the lonely one was wont to stand beneath a tree on the playground and stoically watch them. This habit, his deformity and the children's knowledge of the vivid red owl caused them to nickname him "Hunchy—The Owl."

Donald Barclay, who had been an orphan infant in the same Asylum as Hunchy, was eighteen years of age when he read the newspaper accounts of the deformed foundling. He resolved that on his next visit to the City he would call at the Asylum and see the strange foundling. Donald had thought Fate unkind when his parents lost their lives in the "Johnstown Disaster," but he realized that to the deformed and owl-marked babe Fate had been unkind and cruelly unjust.

Donald had been a healthy babe, of good, though lowly parentage, was pretty and of a loving disposition which made him a favorite with all his comrades. An ardent student, he learned rapidly and became a very intelligent boy. Silas Gregory, a successful financier, who had lost his only son, adopted Donald

and sent him to the college at which he read of "Hunchy." In due time Donald graduated with high honors for mental and physical efficiency, his foster-father then making him junior member of the new firm, "Gregory & Barclay."

Doris, the only daughter of Silas and Mrs. Gregory, was a spoiled child, wilful and wayward, her unwise behavior often filling her father's mind with grave apprehensions for her future. His health failed and he realized that he was on the border of "The Valley of Dark Shadows." He also sadly realized that Doris was as her mother had been in the days when he silently suffered rather than face disgraceful publicity.

He thought of Donald and of the stability and beauty of his character and with the thought came the desire to have him marry Doris; his fatherly instincts causing him to overlook the injustice of the desire, by reason of his eagerness to provide a safe guide for his child's future.

Rex Williams, handsome as he was useless, was a suitor for the hand of Doris, and the wild escapades of the two, including unchaperoned trips of unwarranted duration, had quite broken Silas Gregory's heart.

Soon after Donald's graduation and the forming of the new firm, his foster-father was stricken with apoplexy and realized that the end was near. Calling Doris and Donald to his bedside he told them of his great desire and placed it before them as his dying request.

Doris and Rex Williams had quarrelled over the former's attentions to a rival; the marriage ceremony was a mere detail made necessary by custom and she readily gave her promise to marry Donald.

Donald's studies and his work had secluded from his life all love affairs. He fully realized that the dying man had made him what he was and the gratitude in his loving heart left no hesitation in his fair and noble mind.

They were married, moved to a growing city where Donald continued a prosperous business under the old firm name, assigning all the monies and interests of the old firm to Mrs. Silas Gregory.

Years passed and no children came to gratify a longing in Barclay's heart. He struggled to meet the ever increasing extravagance of Doris, who left him beside a lonely hearth a greater portion of the time while she took long motoring trips, supposedly to visit her mother.

Business affairs necessitated a trip to the city wherein was located the "Asylum" and Barclay then remembered the long forgotten resolution to see the deformed foundling. Passing the playgrounds he saw a deformed boy standing beneath a tree in

the corner of the grounds.

"Hunchy" stood beneath the tree, maddening thoughts in his intelligent brain, a sickening pain in his grievously wounded heart. On his way to the playground he had passed through the class-room and there saw a misshapen thing chalked on the blackboard, part human, part owl, beneath it inscribed the words "Hunchy—The Owl."

Seized with a frenzy of despair the boy frantically tore open the front of his blouse, beat his owl-marked chest with clenched fists, threw himself to the ground, his scrawny hands gripping the grass, his misshapen form shaken by a paroxysm of sobs.

Strong, but gentle, hands raised the sobbing boy from the ground, a kindly voice spoke words of cheer and bade him to cease crying. He looked up and saw the face of a man in whose eyes was an expression he never before had seen; an expression that caused his scrawny hands to grasp and cling to the arms that lifted him. The man freed one arm and wiped away the boy's tears, Hunchy's heart madly beating as he felt himself pressed to a human breast. Then that poor starved heart nearly strangled him with joy as the man's lips were pressed to his own in the first kiss he had ever known. Tears came to the eyes of Barclay, a man made in the likeness of Him who hath said, "Forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Donald adopted "Hunchy Boy," (as he called him,) intending to give him a home beneath his own roof. Doris flatly refused to see "the brat," still less to have him in her house.

Therefore, Donald established "Hunchy Boy" in a neat little "Shine Parlor," with a living room in the rear of it. Hunchy worked diligently, saved thriftily and worshipped the man who had created for him paradise.

Donald found solace and pleasure in devotion to the boy who otherwise would have been deprived of the love of any human being. Together they poured over books of instruction in order that the boy might have an education. Together, in spare hours, they rambled the fields and meadows, the man explaining the wonders of Nature, both finding that for which they had hungered, loving companionship.

For a time life was passing sweet to "Hunchy-Boy," then came the World War and with it Donald's enlistment and departure, his absence crippling the hours like unto "Hunchy's" very self who hobbled painfully through the hours, weeks, eternities.

Gone was the sunshine of Donald's smile, the kindly light of his eyes, the cheer and comfort of his voice, that unknown something so dear to life and leaving it desolate when Captain Donald Barclay marched away at the head of his Company, the

cheering crowd paying but little heed to the crippled boy standing at the curb, tears in his eyes and a sickening pain in his lonely heart.

Headed by its gallant captain, the company approached the spot where stood the boy, his heart hammering in a breast filled with longing for one look from the eyes he loved so well. Directly opposite the boy, Donald turned his head and smiled at him as he gave a gallant salute. The twisted little form, as best it could, came to "attention," the scrawny arm and hand came to the salute and so remained until the company had passed, then the queer little figure hobbled to the room in the rear of the Shoe-Shop, where it fell across the cot and so remained through the bitter hours of the night.

Time passed, men came to the shop, Hunchy made their boots cleaner than their souls while he listened to tales of the war, of the nothings of the day and to the inevitable scandals of the time.

There came whisperings of the woman who refused to have Hunchy in her house; whisperings of Doris and Rex Williams. Hunchy's scrawny hands clutched hard at the brushes as his heart filled with vengefulness for those who dared to break faith with his idol.

Letters filled with words of cheer and comfort came from Donald, always with the assurance that he was well and that the Allies would surely gain the victory.

Came a letter, addressed in a strange handwriting but bearing the usual postmark and fear tugged at the boy's heart as he opened it with trembling hands. It was a letter from a Nursing Sister who wrote that Captain Barclay had been wounded and wished Hunchy not to worry for he would soon be home again.

Vengefulness again filled the boy's heart, for those who had wounded Donald, and for those who had broken faith with him.

One evening Hunchy was standing on the "wood-road," at the outskirts of the city, where he was wont to go to see the moon come up and to hear an owl hoot at the night. An automobile without lights swiftly rounded a nearby curve in the road and gave the boy scant time to hobble out of the way, grazing him as it passed. He heard a woman's laughter and Rex Williams' shout, "out of the way, toad, or you will be made more beautiful than you are." Vengefulness became more firmly fixed in Hunchy's heart and for the moment, murderous intent as well.

The great day came when Captain Barclay arrived and then came the crowning sorrow of Hunchy's life.

Together they had heard the music of the babbling brook

as they watched its merry waters swirl against the boulders at the bend, where it purred over the pebbly approach to the little fall tumbling to the pool below.

Together they had inhaled the fragrance of the flowers of the fields, had raised their tender blossoms to caressing lips and with gladsome eyes looked at their fair hues.

Together they had seen the beauties of the sky, by day and by night, the man telling the boy of The Creator and that He also created man and that to Him the most beautiful thing in the World was a Christian Soul, even were it housed in a twisted frame.

The pleasure of seeing and understanding the simple and sweet lives of Nature's children and the wonders of the sky; the consolation that their Maker was his own, had changed the morose boy to a believer in the bright side of life, but all happiness, all consolation was blotted out by one cruel daub of misery's brush, for when Donald returned it was never again to look upon the old beloved sights, for he was blind.

At the railway station the crowd saw him led from the train with a bandage over his eyes. He heard the sob Hunchy could not smother, and the old sweet smile came to his lips as he called the stricken boy to him and said, "Do not grieve, 'Hunchy-Boy,' The Creator has so willed it you know, we must be brave and believe that 'He doeth all things well.' Again we shall roam the fields and meadows together, your eyes seeing for both, you, the man, I, the child, whom you shall lead and tell of Nature's children amid scenes we so well knew."

Never a complaint voiced, always a smile and cheerful word for his friends of seeing days, such was the man as they saw him. When in the fields and meadows with his faithful guide, there came a change and a look of sadness came to his face as he told the boy of the flowers and birds of beautiful France, and of the longing in his heart to see them once more. When the two sat on the bank of the brook, listening to the song of its merry waters and of joyous birds hovering near, the man would softly sing old French love songs, the boy watching his idol's dear face, realizing that the echo of a far away song lived in the man's heart.

At eventide the boy would lead the way to a great rock on the cliff above the wood-road, there to await the end of day. In that quiet and peaceful spot, the rays of the setting sun be-decking the sky, the boy would describe their changing hues until they faded into the darkness of night.

Came the time when the boy's health failed and a physician declared indoor life and the stooping position, while polishing

boots had seriously injured his lungs. He must get in the open air, live in a tent, if possible, and take a long rest.

Having saved thriftily, Hunchy had a neat little sum in the bank, so he bought a tent, secured permission from the owner of the cliff land, pitched the tent beside the great rock and moved his little store of household goods into it, renting the shop to a boy of the town.

On the days they roamed the fields, the man and boy would spend the evenings in the tent, the boy studying his lessons, the man acting as teacher.

On evenings when the sky was clear, and the stars brightly shining, the boy would describe the location of the "fixed" stars, Donald telling their names and the constellation to which they belonged. Once he surprised the boy by asking if a "shooting star" had not crossed the sky when in fact one had done so at the moment.

One evening Barclay said, "Hunchy-Boy, you can now read, write and spell well enough to be of great benefit to both of us. I am not rich and must soon become a burden unless in some way I can earn money. We should be able to write stories for publication and if you will buy the necessary stationery we will see what can be done."

The next day Hunchy bought the stationery and on that evening was started the story, "Vivette."

CHAPTER II.

Roy Meets Vivette

Captain Roy R. Knight, of the American Overseas Forces, leaned forward to clink glasses with the beautiful girl sitting opposite him at one of the little marble-topped tables in the Cafe St. Barb, Rue de la Minette, Paris, France.

The lips of her tempting mouth shamed the coloring of the wine, the brilliancy of the light in her big brown eyes dimmed the glitter of the upraised glass, and to the red blood coursing in Roy's veins her presence was more intoxicating than the wine he drank.

Their glances met over the brims of the upraised glasses, Mademoiselle's little hand trembled, her heavily lashed eyelids curtailed the brown pools of light which retained the vision of this care-free American officer with eyes of blue-grey, and whose presence filled her heart with the desire to be his very own, then and evermore. In Captain Knight's heart was also born to enduring life, the desire to have and to hold evermore, beautiful Vivette.

It may be that transmigration of souls was here evidence as fact, and again were met he who once challenged the Junglewold

to dispute his right to take unto himself this maiden tigress, and she, who by soft purrings, shoulder jostlings and glances filled with matingtime knowledge was obeying Nature's command to find a fitting mate, such a one as this perfect son of a Jungle Monarch, who returned her loving glances with love-light in his eyes.

A messenger from Headquarters had come "up the line" to give Captain Knight the Brigadier's compliments and a written order to report at once at Headquarters.

Roy handed over his company to his "next in command" and made the journey to Headquarters, where he was admitted to the Brigadier's dug-out.

The Brigadier returned Roy's salute and said: "Captain Knight, I am told that you are a very reliable officer and that you read, write and speak several languages. If so, what are those languages?"

"English, French, Italian and German, Sir," replied Roy.

During his mental appraisal of the perfect specimen of manhood before him, the Brigadier noted the smiling blue-grey eyes that looked unflinching into his own and refrained from asking if Roy was once known as "Tiger Knight," the "Centre" of a famous pennant-winning football team in 1912. The question was not asked because the Brigadier sensed that at the back of the smile and the blue-grey of the unflinching eyes lived a will that would "buck the line" to the limit of its backing in physical force, and Roy's frame looked bucking ability of sixteen ounces to the pound, up to the two-hundred mark.

The mental appraisal completed, the Brigadier handed an envelope to Roy, saying: "Deliver that to the officer addressed. You will note that he is a General of the French Forces in Paris. Your mission is strictly secret. Your Battalion Commander has been instructed to give you indefinite "leave of absence" and your Paymaster to supply you with funds and a letter of credit. You will obey the orders given you by the French General when he releases you from duty. I believe you are to tackle a man's job and I also believe you are a man. You may go."

Roy arrived in Paris on the same day the first shell from the great German gun "Bertha" fell in that city. He delivered the envelope to the General and was told by him that the Secret Service, of which he was Commander, had known of the preparations to shell Paris with "Bertha," but the "Service" had been and was taxed to the limit of its efficiency. Therefore, each of the Allied Commanders had been requested to supply one man to assist in the work. From later interviews with the General, Roy learned that the success of the shelling by "Bertha" depended entirely upon the ability to hit a given mark. This could not be done

without the assistance of an "Observer," to report the hits and the "Observer" must be located where he could observe. The idea that the Huns sought means to frighten the French people was erroneous. The idea that they desired to kill women and children was equally erroneous. They knew that the brain which provided for the armies in the field were located in Paris and to paralyse that function would paralyse the whole machine of the French Army. Clemenceau, the Lloyd George of France, had twice narrowly escaped death from the first bombardment, one shell striking a college in which he was giving a lecture to the students. That shot was undoubtedly directed by an observer somewhere in Paris and his signalling station must be found.

There had been one incident noted that might be a clue to the district in which the station was located. An airman of the fleet guarding Paris had seen strange flashes of light far above him when no other fliers were in the vicinity. Immediately following the flashes came the shell that struck the college in which Clemenceau was lecturing. The absence of other aircraft indicated that the flashes were operated from the ground. The observer of the patrolling airship noted that he was over the District of the Rue de la Minette.

The assistants sent by the several Allied Commanders were given certain sections to operate in and that of the Rue de la Minette fell to Captain Roy R. Knight, of the American Forces.

On the Rue de la Minette was located the Cafe St. Barb, the proprietor being one Lucien Dufresne, a veteran of the war of 1870, and a true patriot of France. Captain Knight decided to live at the Cafe St. Barb and with the assistance of Lucien Dufresne become acquainted with his patrons and the district. Lucien pretended that his guest had been granted "sick leave" and had chosen the Cafe in which to convalesce, Lucien arranging a small room in the rear of the Cafe for his guest.

Roy keenly observed the patrons of the district. He took flights with airmen of the Paris fleet and with a special camera obtained photographs of the house-tops of the entire district. Nothing developed to cast suspicion on any of the persons met or watched, and the photographs failed to show any trace of wireless or other signalling device.

One evening Lucien was arranging the wine glasses at the back of the bar of the Cafe, Roy standing in front of it, chatting with his host. The Cafe door opened, and Roy hearing the swish of a silken skirt turned to see who had entered, then surprised Lucien with the intensity of his whispered question, "Ye Gods, who is she?"

Lucien turned to look at the girl, who had taken a chair at one of the tables, his cheeks blanched, the wine glass fell from

his hand to the floor, and Roy turned away quickly to lead Lucien to think he had not observed his agitation.

As Roy turned away from the bar he saw in a mirror near the girl who had entered, a face of great beauty, the brown eyes met his own, dilated slightly, then hid behind their heavy lashes.

Roy turned to Lucien, who had regained his composure, and said, "Talk about 'Picture Girls,' Christie would throw away his easel if he caught a glimpse of that genuine one. But, go and see what she wants, and ask if she will share a bottle of wine with me."

The girl gave Lucien an order for cakes and claret, and he returned to the bar, again greatly agitated, so much that Roy could no longer feign ignorance and said, "My dear friend, you look as if you had seen a ghost. What is the matter?"

"Forgive me, Captain, I have not seen a ghost but that beautiful girl's face has brought back memories of long ago when a great sorrow entered my life. It is too long a story to tell now, later you shall hear it. Go to her and ask her to share a bottle of claret. You will lose your heart, have a care that your head does not go with it."

Roy went to the girl, saluted and said, "Forgive me, mademoiselle, and please accept as a reason for my boldness the fact that I am an American far from home and very lonely. I shall be greatly pleased if you will honor me with permission to sit with you and share a bottle of our host's excellent wine."

With a timid expression in her eyes, the girl looked up at Roy and said: "The pleasure and honor shall be mine, Captain from America, and as you have come far to aid us, we can but do what we may to show our appreciation. Is it not so, my brave Captain?"

Having spoken in the perfect French taught him by the professor at college, Roy was surprised to hear the girl's answer in perfect English, with only a trace of French accent. Seating himself in a chair opposite the girl he called Lucien and ordered a bottle of wine, "the best in the house."

Lucien had regained his composure and with the grace of a chevalier of old he bowed and gave to each a smile, half sad, half gay, as he said: "With great pleasure, my good friends, you shall be served."

From a remote corner of the cellar he selected a bottle musty with age, the label indistinctly proclaiming it to be, "Burgundy,"—"St. Emellon, 1900." Lucien was justly proud of his wines, bottled and aged by his own methods, and the wine served to mademoiselle and Captain Knight had no successful rival in all France.

The time was "Wartime," and in a measure, or broad sense, it was a time that caused those who were in close contact with the war, to become unconsciously isolated from the balance of the world, its loves, ties and influences. The man who hugged the

parapets while bullets snapped overhead and artillery's hell raged about him, was isolated from all the world, not visible through the windows of his gas-mask. When he was out on patrol duty in "no man's-land," and a flare hissed its way aloft, his world became the area of sticky mud covered by his prostrated form as he held his breath and hoped the cursed thing would burn out before he was seen. When he went "back for rest," his world became "Billets," and that alone. When he went on "Leave," all his world was within sight and he saw everything possible. There were other worlds, their loves and their ties, back in the far-away land called Home, and where good and sanctimonious people lived quiet and temptation-free lives and held up their hands in horror at the things chronicled about the rascal, but, hours, days, weeks and months had seen him in company with hardships and misery, with DEATH stalking at his side and whispering again and again, "Life may be yours for the moment only, remember, ages are surely mine; therefore, live for what fickle life offers, by the moment."

So isolated, mademoiselle and Captain Knight drank wine from upraised glasses, and love potions from pools of brown and blue-grey. Fingertips lightly brushed fingertips, then shyly snuggled into palms that ever so gently closed and completed the heart-circuit over which thrilled messages in a code as old as Adam and Eve.

By the time the wine was low in the musty bottle, the fact of transmigration of souls, or the magic of love, or the laws of involuntary isolation had accomplished what years often fail to accomplish, and companionship for life was an imperative necessity for the happiness of Mademoiselle Vivette, (the name she gave,) and Captain Roy R. Knight, of the American Overseas Forces.

Roy filled the glasses with wine, gave one to Vivette, took the other in his right hand and her left in his own, raised his glass and said, "A boon I crave from you, dear Vivette, a toast for the moment and from the secret chamber of your heart."

A smile formed on Vivette's lips, a smile caused by the semi-serious manner of Roy's request, but the smile quickly faded as their glances met and their hands gently closed. She raised the glass to hide the drooping corners of her mouth that suggested a struggling sob as she gave the toast; "To 'Hope' my brave, and that she may prove true that that which my soul reads in your eyes comes from your own soul, as true as that which I wish my soul to print in my eyes that you may see there written, love eternal."

They drank the wine, Vivette blushing disengaged her hand and laughed, a merry little token of happiness sweetly intoned with shyness, then said: "Will you remain long in Paris, my Brave?"

"Ah, Vivette," replied Roy, "one can not say, for the soldier can not tell where his commander may wish him to be on the morrow and even here in Paris the moment only can be called our own."

As if to emphasize the truth of Roy's remark a crashing explosion near at hand startled the occupants of the Cafe and confusion reigned among them.

Vivette sprang from her chair and started toward the door, and Roy heard her say, in an undertone, "Again!"

He sprang up and detained Vivette with a firm hold on her arm as he persuaded her to remain, assuring her that danger lurked in the street, even more than in the Cafe.

The explosion roused Roy to a sense of his duty and his mind instantly cleared for action. He thought of the word "Again," and wondered if Vivette referred to the work of "Bertha," or to the part taken by someone he knew would "again" be connected with that work. He also thought of Lucien's strange agitation when she entered the Cafe and wondered if he knew Vivette to be an enemy of France.

The hum of flying machines warned him that the fleet was on the lookout for the strange signals. He should be where he could see the prearranged signals from the fleet to assist him in locating the signalling station. He was about to ask Vivette to excuse him when she relieved him of that unpleasant task by saying, "My sister is very timid and will be greatly alarmed by the bombardment. Will you kindly pardon me if I go to her? Soon, very soon I hope, we may meet again."

Through Roy's mind flashed the intention to ask permission to accompany Vivette to her home but prudence suggested his pretending a friend was to call on him at the Cafe. Prudence won and he said, "Are you afraid to go alone? Unfortunately I have an appointment here with a friend; he would perhaps wait for my return."

"Oh no," said Vivette, and Roy thought a relieved expression came to her face as she continued, "I am not the least bit afraid and you must promise me not to disappoint your friend."

"Very well, then," said Roy, "I will promise not to disappoint my friend, if you will promise to meet me here tomorrow night."

Vivette extended her hand and said, "My Brave, I promise."

Their hands and glances met, Roy accompanied her to the door, both laughing as with great seriousness they said, in unison, "Until tomorrow night."

CHAPTER III.

A Strange Premonition

Day was breaking when Captain Barclay said, "I am, and I know you must be tired, Hunchy-Boy, we will leave Vivette and Captain Knight at the Cafe door. Please take me home now and come for me tomorrow evening when we will continue the story."

Returning along the wood-road after taking Captain Barclay home, Hunchy pondered over the tale of Roy and Vivette, the big gun "Bertha," and of his blind friend's ability to create vision people and in fancy cause them to live and move as he willed.

At the point in the story where Vivette entered the Cafe, the boy was watching the man's face and the joyous expression in it made the boy think that in fancy the girl stood before him.

So intent had the blind man's mind been on the story that he failed to hear an automobile passing on the wood-road, and the sound of laughter by those in it. Hunchy had heard and knew that Rex Williams had known Captain Barclay would be at the tent, and had spent the greater part of the night in some secluded spot with Mrs. Barclay.

A new world of thought had opened for the boy's mind and for the first time he longed for a more thorough knowledge of himself, who he was, why he had become a foundling. A new and strange fancy took possession of him and he closed his eyes in an effort to picture, (as his blind friend had pictured Vivette,) his unknown mother. Perhaps she was good and beautiful like Vivette. With these thoughts came the recollection of Captain Barclay's explanation of The Creator and his statement that He had also created all things, and if so, He had created even a poor crippled foundling's mother. At this thought the quaint little form knelt in prayer on a grassy bank beside the moonlit road and from that lonely soul came a prayer that it might know who mothered it and that her face might be seen and her voice heard. In all his prayers thereafter, Hunchy repeated that appeal.

The following evening Hunchy called for his friend and led him to the tent. As they were walking along the wood-road at the foot of the cliff, the blind man halted and said, "Hunchy-Boy, whenever we pass this point a strange feeling comes over me, a premonition that this spot will have much to do with our lives. Tell me what is overhead."

The boy looked up at the branch of the great elm beside the road over which it extended and as he did so an owl flew from it on heavy wings and perched upon the rock beside the tent on the cliff. Of this Hunchy told the blind man who said, "An owl! A thing of the night which gave me the premonition. A blind man's

fancy, perhaps, but in future we will shun this spot."

Continuing they approached the rock and tent, the owl flying back to the elm; entering the tent they continued the story of Vivette.

CHAPTER IV. Tracking the Spy

Closing the Cafe door, Roy hurried to his room took his "Colt Automatic" from the cupboard, slipped it into the holster inside his coat, then hurried back to the door, passing Lucien, who whispered, "Be on your guard, you are watched." Roy gave no outward evidence that he had heard as he whispered, "I am prepared," and passed out to the darkened street.

Along the Rue de la Minette on the side upon which the Cafe was located, the electric light globes had been stained blue and hoods placed over them to hide their light from raiding airmen. On the opposite side the lights were disused.

The block to the right of the Cafe was unbroken by a cross street for a distance of approximately one hundred yards but there was a cross street a short distance to the left. The time taken by Roy to get his "Automatic" was not sufficient for Vivette to reach the cross street to the right. The noise of the airplanes came from that direction and Roy crossed to the darkest side of the street and hurried toward them. He could watch the spaces at the opposite corners where the hooded lights cast their blue rays to the sidewalk. Watching the first corner, he saw a form pass through the lighted space. It was Vivette.

They passed three blocks, Roy catching sight of Vivette as she passed the corners. He had periodically glanced up to see if the continuously circling planes were signalling but none had given the pre-arranged signal. Several times he had looked back thinking he might be followed by the person Lucien had referred to as watching him, but saw no one follow through the lighted spaces.

As Vivette did not pass the fourth lighted space, Roy stopped in the centre of the block and became alert to catch the sound of a door opening or closing. Noticing that he was standing in front of an entrance to a store, he backed into it, crouched low and listened and hearing stealthy footsteps on the walk near him, he realized that he had been followed, his follower also taking the dark side of the street. Drawing his Automatic from the holster he threw off the "safety" and waited. A form moved into view and stopped at the curb directly in front of Roy who indistinctly made out the figure of a man fully six feet in height and of powerful build. Apparently thinking he had lost the trail the man crossed the street, cursing and mumbling to himself as he went. Roy suddenly levelled the automatic, thought of Vivette, lowered

It without firing although the mumbling and cursing was in fluent German. Here was ample reason to believe that he was on the track of the signallers for "Bertha." The impulse to follow the cursing German was a strong one but prudence had been the policy of "Tiger Knight" on the gridiron and it ruled now. He hoped to hear the opening or closing of a door, or to see light, indicating that his follower had entered a house across the street but his hope was not realized. He hated the thought that Vivette had also disappeared in that block, thought of Lucien's agitation as she entered the Cafe, of her word "again," and of Lucien's warning. All these indicated that Vivette was associated with the mystery he was detailed to solve. He decided to take no action until he had had an interview with Lucien.

An hour's vigil in the entrance, the departure of the Air Patrol without results, the non-appearance of anyone departing from the block after the mysterious disappearance of Vivette and the cursing German, convinced Roy that further watching was useless. Cautiously emerging from the store entrance, he returned to the Cafe, determined to ask Lucien for an explanation of his agitation and warning.

CHAPTER V.

Hunchy's Dream

Hunchy had become greatly interested in the story and was anxious to continue but Captain Barclay seemed despondent and at the point where Roy returned to the Cafe, he asked the boy to take him home. He was silent during the journey and made no appointment for the continuance of the story and sad at heart Hunchy returned to his tent. The next day he called at the Barclay home to see if his friend wished to continue the story that evening. Mrs. Barclay answered the ring and disdainfully said, "Captain Barclay does not wish to be disturbed."

The next five successive days Hunchy called and each time received the same disdainful answer. On the sixth day he went to the "Shine-Shop" to collect an instalment due and there heard that which explained the failure of his friend to come with him to the tent. Men at the shop were talking of a quarrel in which Mrs. Barclay had twitted the Captain of foolishly leaving his business to go to war, with the result that he returned sightless to offer her a "beggar's pension." She quoted Rex Williams as being more sensible and then added that she would have been better off single with her mother who was well able to provide for her as she wished to be provided for.

The thought that the man who had called him a toad was at the bottom of the trouble and that his blind friend knew it

as well and felt the public must also know, filled Hunchy's heart with a desire to kill. Fearing the desire would overpower him, he ran from the shop to his tent and fell exhausted on the bed.

It was midnight when fitful sleep came to the relief of his tortured mind. He tossed restlessly and fell to dreaming. The tent flap folded back as if by invisible hands, an owl stalked in and perched itself upon the table, its great eyes fixed on those of the boy. He extended his neck, the feathers ruffling out on it as the tent faded from view and the owl grew to gigantic proportions and appeared to be floating in air. Reaching down with one of his huge legs, he wrapped its talons about the boy and drew him up against his breast. Far below was the rock and tent and the wood-road along the foot of the cliff. The owl's eyes became as powerful as searchlights and as he turned them on the scene below, Hunchy saw someone with a spade, digging under the rock on the side toward the steep bank of the cliff. The digger paused in his work, leaned on the spade and Hunchy saw himself. The owl stretched out his leg, opened the talons and the boy fell through space.

With a violent start Hunchy sat up in bed, awake and coughing. The sound of heavy wings outside the tent told him that the owl had been perched on the rock and had flown at the sound of his coughing. Great beads of perspiration stood out on the boy's forehead and his hands trembled as he took some of the medicine the doctor had prescribed. The medicine put him to sleep again, the last sensibility being the sound of the owl in the woods below as he sent out his mournful "Hoo-hoo! Hoo-hoo! Hoo-hoo!"

The hooting of the owl changed to a hoarse voice calling "Hunchy-Boy! Hunchy-Boy! Boy-oy-oy!" An irresistible force seemed to drag Hunchy from the bed and lead him to the side of the rock. A great star in the heavens lit up the woods and the road below the cliff, the elm stood out plainly visible and on the branch over the road sat the owl. His eyes were sending rays of light along the road to the right and two bright lights swiftly came along it as the hum of the engine of an automobile was distinctly heard. Then came an explosion that shook the earth, the branch of the elm crashed to the road, the owl beneath it. The rock beside Hunchy rocked violently and toppled toward the cliff.

Again he awoke with a start and heard the last rumbles of what must have been a heavy peal of thunder. The scattered drops of a passing shower were falling on the tent as he went out to the rock to see if again he had been dreaming. Day was breaking, the sun rising bright and clear after the storm, the rock and elm were undisturbed, but the dreams of the night

preyed on his mind and loneliness increased his discomfort.

Hurriedly cooking and eating his breakfast he walked to town and rang the door bell of Captain Barclay's home.

Dressed for a walk, the Captain appeared and Hunchy feverishly grasped his hand and asked him to come to the tent. He squeezed the boy's hand and whispered, "To the tent and our story."

CHAPTER VI.

The Love Story of Lucien

Arriving at the Cafe after his vigil at the store entrance, Roy found Lucien alone, nervously pacing the floor.

"Thank God, you are safe," said Lucien, "I feared the man who followed you would work you harm."

"Do you know him?" asked Roy.

"No, he is a stranger, and in these times we distrust strangers. I am certain he is a dangerous enemy."

"You are right, Lucien, and I am now anxious to hear the story you spoke of as being recalled by Mademoiselle's presence. Is she also an enemy?"

With a kindly light in his eyes, Lucien saw the yearning in those of Roy, and perhaps his mind recalled youthful days when he too felt the call of heart's desire and knew no consolation until his arms enfolded the object of his love. With his usual loving clasp on his listener's arm, Lucien said: "It is a long and sad story, my friend, and the sight of Mademoiselle tonight turned back the pages of life's story to the happenings of many years ago, after the Germans broke our hearts, but not our pride, at the time of the "Commune" and the terrible ravages of the wolves of Paris, the Apaches. But come to my room and you shall hear the story."

Locking the Cafe doors, Lucien led the way to a door at the top of the stairway at the back of the Cafe. Opening the door he courteously bade Roy enter and switched on an electric light hanging over a life-sized portrait on an easel in a corner of the room. There was a moment of tense silence, a silence of devotion and admiration, then came Roy's surprised whisper, "Vivette."

"No, it is not Vivette," said Lucien, "it is a portrait of one of God's masterpieces, painted by the cunning hand of a dear friend of mine. Sit down and you shall know why no little ones have ever played about my knees, why Lucien Dufresne has lived all these years like a mole in his burrow, with only one ray of life's sunshine and that one entrapped by the cunning hands of my friend, and yet 'tis more to me than all other sunshine in the world." Tears welled to the old man's eyes, and there were a few moments of sacred silence before he continued.

"My father was proprietor of this Cafe at the time when the German cannons were thundering outside and the Apaches were fighting our soldiers and among themselves, inside the walls of Paris. The "Commune" was at its height, and I, a boy in years, fought with the true patriots of bleeding France. Receiving an ugly wound I was allowed to live here with my father and I heard the men, too old to fight, gathered here talk of the war and the "Commune." They told of a woman of wondrous beauty who was known to be of noble blood and who had formed a liaison with a German baron who betrayed 'Napoleon the Third.' Through his paramour, the beautiful woman, who was Queen of the Apaches, the Baron had secured the aid of her band of savages, with the result that surrender to the Germans was the only way to end the terrible conflict. It was said that the incidents leading to the war were but a part of a great plan to rob France of her vast coal and iron districts in order that Germany might use them to prepare for a great war that some day would place all the world at Germany's feet. The present war, my dear friend, is that war, and we know now why Count Von Moltke insisted on retaining the territory that held great deposits of coal and iron.

Father died during the war, and I took his place in the Cafe, mother having died when I, the first born, came into the world.

Alone and filled with remorse over the death of my father and the agony of our country, I became as an old man despite my youth, living in these few little rooms.

Three friends tried to cheer me and get me to join them in their social world. They were Julien Montreuil, a medical student, Pierre Sonrel, a student of the Art Institute and Joseph Ledue, of the Detective Force. Many were the evenings we sat in the Cafe after the patrons had gone, discussing the future of our country. Often the others would tell of their loves and chide me, the eldest of the four, for remaining a bachelor.

Late one night we were together and I was about to bar the Cafe doors, when I heard a faint knock, and opened the door to see who might want entrance at that late hour. A beautiful girl staggered in and we at first thought she had been drinking. A white rose adorned her brown hair and in her hands she held a bouquet of them, which she pressed to her breast as she steadied herself and bravely tried to smile at us. The white roses pressed to her breast slowly turned crimson as if blushing from shame at her condition. The blush was from blood that came from a wound made by a rapier or stiletto. Her cheeks blanched, the smile left her lips, and she sank to the floor moaning, "My babes! Oh, my babes!"

Julien, the Medical Student, was the first to act. He took the girl in his arms and carried her to my bedroom and laid her on

the bed, then bade me go quickly and bring wine from the Cafe. I brought the wine and he forced some of it through her white lips. The wine revived her but she was delirious and continually called for her babes.

Julien dressed the wound from the supply of bandages and balms I had secured when wounded. She soon sank into a sleep, the sleep of exhaustion and loss of blood, then Julien beckoned us to follow him down to the Cafe.

We counselled as to what was best to do. Julien said the wound was a serious one and her recovery very doubtful; so that removal was impossible as hemorrhage would result from the slightest exertion or excitement, and death quickly follow. Pierre, the artist, became greatly excited and begged that he be allowed to paint a picture of the girl as she stood before us smiling while the roses blushed with the stain of blood. Joseph, the detective, warned us that we were in a sorry predicament and the first thought should be how to extricate ourselves from it. Murders were common in Paris at the time and the city rife with political intrigues; the case in hand might be a part of one of them, and it would be no light task to prove that we were not responsible for the girl's injury or death should she not recover from it. He advised Julien to exert his medical skill to the utmost and try to revive the girl to such an extent that she could sign a written statement freeing us from suspicion. Pierre could paint his picture and future developments might bring him fame. He, Joseph, would not report the case to his chief but would try to solve the mystery himself.

We finally decided that Joseph's plan was the only one to follow. Julien would arrange to secure night duty at the hospital and attend the girl during the day, I could sleep on the lounge beside her bed at night and attend to her wants until he arrived in the morning, Pierre could use the little room in the rear of the Cafe for his studio and Joseph would immediately endeavor to learn the identity of our patient.

Mystery and excitement filled our young lives to overflowing and whilst the others had their studios, to me came the greatest problem, love. The mole in his burrow was no longer alone for into it had come a beautiful companion, bruised, hurt, helpless, even without a mind to dictate what she should do. But sympathy and compassion crowded all else from the mole's heart, and became the sure stepping stones of a pure and holy love. So, love intensely sweet entered my lonely life and I pleaded with God to spare the fading flower that I might love and cherish it so long as life should last.

Tenderly I performed the duties that befell me, each effort that caused me to place my arms about her or pass nourishment through the soft lips causing my heart to beat madly and my senses to

reel as I staggered to the lounge and knelt in prayer to God to give me strength to keep sacred my trust, and to restore reason to her that I might tell her of the great love in my heart.

One night I was dreaming of a little home in which my love and I were seated by the fireplace, two little ones playing at our knees, when I awoke and heard sobs and quickly sprang from the lounge to learn what had occurred. The sobs ceased and a sweet voice said, "Where am I?"

I answered, 'Do not be afraid, you are among friends, safe from your enemies.'

I lit the lamps and saw that she was sitting up in bed, two hectic spots on her cheeks, her eyes brightly shining. She saw the bandages on her breast, timidly felt them and said, 'Am I to die? Do not fear to tell me for I shall be brave even if it be so. Come and sit beside me and tell who you are and how I came to be here with you.'

I sat beside her and told of her arrival at the Cafe and of the four friends who had kept the secret of her presence there. Then I told her of our fears that she might die and we be held responsible for her death. When I asked her to tell me who she was and who had so grievously wounded her, she looked into my eyes and I saw the expression of a frightened fawn of the chase. She grasped my hands and cried, 'Don't let them kill my babes, my poor babes, what have they done with them?'

Her sorrow and fright filled my heart with compassion and I could not resist the impulse to take her in my arms as I told her of my love for her and that I would care for and protect her forever.

She ceased crying, gently raised herself from my breast and looked steadily into my eyes as if to read the meaning there. Her arms crept around my neck, her soft cheek pressed against my own and the greatest joy of life was mine.

How long we remained in that embrace I can not tell. Again raising herself from my breast she said, 'I can not tell you all, but this much you may now know. I am of Royal blood, a descendant of the Kings of France, of a family cursed for generations by political intrigues that have kept it hidden in secret places for fear of extermination. The love of my France must have been instilled into my veins from someone true to the principles of freedom for when but a little child I revolted against the things I but vaguely understood as against our country.'

'All my life has been spent in hiding among people who plundered the rich and fought among themselves over the plunder. These people lived in underground passages beneath the city and was never allowed to leave them. My mother was "Queen," my father a German Baron whom I seldom saw. When I was but

a child my father brought a pig of a boy to our hiding place and said the boy and I were to be married and that some day I would be a great lady in my husband's country which would rule the world. He sent to us an old man who instructed us in the subjects necessary to fit us for the places we were to occupy after the great war that is to come when all is prepared for it.

'When I was fourteen years of age we were married and to us were born twin girls. My precious babes made life livable and I endured it, ever hoping that some day when they had become older we would run away. Years passed and no chance came until there came a great quarrel among our people and I tried to find a way to escape. My husband must have known of my intentions for he cruelly beat me and then some of the men of our tribe interfered which caused a fierce fight that spread like wildfire throughout the entire tribe. My mother was killed and my babes torn from me.

Reason must have left me for a time and upon its return I was lying on the floor of a dimly-lighted cave wherein was stored plunder of our tribe. I put on one of the dresses found among the plunder and wandered through tunnels leading from the cave, coming to a stairway I mounted it and succeeded in finding a trap-door at the top and found myself in a small room of a deserted church. I found the way from the church and eagerly inhaled the sweet air of freedom. The sky was clear, the stars brightly shining and the scent of roses filled the air. I imagined myself one of the characters in stories I had read which told of such scenes as the one in which I stood. Remembering the pictures our men had shown me when a child, pictures of women with roses in their hair, I plucked one and placed it in my hair and gathered a bouquet of them to carry in my hand. I found a gate in the high stone wall of the churchyard and hearing no sound without, stepped out of it. Instantly strong arms encircled me and I fought desperately to free myself. A sudden pain darted through my breast as if hot iron had pierced it, my assailant releasing me and running through the churchyard. I ran along the road in front of the church, on and on until I felt my strength failing me. As I passed a door which I heard someone barring, I knocked at it and as it opened I entered a room in which were four young men. They faded from view and darkness enfolded me. Slowly light returned and opening my eyes I saw that someone had placed me on a mossy bank in a little grove where flowers were in bloom and their fragrance filled the air. I tried to rise from the bank but a young man leaned over me and gently held me as he bade me lie still and sleep a little longer. Sleep came and at times I would awaken to find the young man holding me in his arms to give me wine to drink or food to eat. He was very

gentle and kind and I tried to speak to him and tell him that I wished him to remain ever at my side for it seemed that I had known and loved him in the World from which we had flown. My heart now tells me that you are that man and that I have found my true love, but, dear heart, I fear it is too late and that death is near."

Her voice grew faint, her little form trembled in my arms as she again placed her arms around my neck and cried. I kissed away her tears and swore never to leave her or permit her enemies to take her from me. She ceased crying and held her face up to mine and I saw the pallor of death spread over it. In the frenzy of despair I pressed my lips to her own and felt the warmth of her life blood surge to our lips as the fatal hemorrhage drove it forth."

At this point in his story, Lucien bowed his head and mute tears wended their way down the grim channels of his cheeks; slowly he conquered his emotion and continued, "Fool that I had been, the cautioning of Julien had been forgotten and the exertion and excitement of talking to me had brought on the fatal hemorrhage and death had claimed her.

The misery of that hour seared my soul like the stroke of white-hot iron and I cried to God to give her back to me, to Julien to come and save her, to her to live, live, live.

When Julien came next morning he found me a senseless thing with the form of my dead love in my arms. Brain fever held me in its clasp for many weeks and when I recovered I found Julien at my side and the portrait there on the easel in the corner of the room. Julien's skill slowly gave me back my good health and Joseph told me that he had become frightened over her death and had told his Chief the complete story of the dead girl. The Chief ordered Joseph to give the body to a man who would call in the dead of night when the streets were deserted, and we were never to mention to a living soul the slightest detail of the affair. The others are long since dead, you are the only one other than myself that knows about it. I am the only living witness and the picture you see, of which Vivette is the living likeness is the only evidence of one of the tragedies of Paris."

Roy stood gazing at the picture, and as Lucien moved to the front of it and knelt in silent prayer, the silence of a great devotion prevailed and Roy went quietly out and down to his little room.

CHAPTER VII.

What Hunchy Saw.

Day was breaking when Donald and Hunchy finished the tale of Lucien's lost love and had left him on bended knee before the

portrait painted by Pierre's cunning hand. The rumble of distant thunder came to their ears and Donald asked Hunchy if he thought they could reach home before the storm broke. Hunchy went out of the tent and saw a dark cloud over the woods, streaks of lightning zig-zagging from it. Returning to the tent he told Donald they might reach his home in time to escape the storm if they hurried down the cliff path and along the wood-road.

As they approached the wood-road, a number of pebbles and a few larger stones clattered down after them. Donald heard them and said, "'Hunchy-Boy,' there will be a landslide here some day, we must report this to the Road Commissioner and ask him to take steps to prevent injury to passers by."

The storm broke just as they entered Donald's house, the rain falling in torrents.

"Just in time, 'Hunchy-Boy,'" said Donald. "You will have to remain here and may as well go to bed for I know you are tired and you must not get wet. Mrs. Barclay is going to her mother's home for a day or two and will be gone before we waken. We will have dinner here, then return to the tent and resume work on the story.

The house was silent, none of the occupants having yet awakened and as Donald could find his way about the house as readily as if he could see he led Hunchy to an attic bedroom and left him there, telling him to enjoy a good rest,

After Donald left the room, Hunchy went to the window to see if the storm was diminishing in fury. Like most violent storms, that one was quickly subsiding and the sun was breaking through the rifts on the horizon. Opening the window to let in the fresh morning air, Hunchy heard a gate at the rear of the house open and close. He looked down and saw Rex Williams run down the lane from the gate, and was about to shout angry words after him but checked himself as he thought of the pain and humiliation that act might cause Donald.

Closing the window Hunchy went to bed and fell into a fitful sleep filled with dreams of Rex Williams and Mrs. Barclay, of Lucien and his dead love, of Roy and Vivette, of the owl and himself. His dreams ended by all these characters grouping themselves on the road at the foot of the cliff. All were intently watching an enormous owl perched upon the rock beside the tent. A terrific peal of thunder shook the earth, the cliff toppled forward and was about to crush them. Hunchy grabbed Donald's hand and made frantic efforts to drag him away from the perilous spot and awoke to find Donald was pulling him by the hand, raising him in bed to waken him as he said, "Come along, 'Hunchy-Boy,' Mrs. Barclay has gone, dress quickly and we will have dinner, then return to our story friends of beloved France."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Pledge of the Rose.

Lucien's story convinced Roy that Vivette was a descendant of the portrait's original, and that she, Vivette, might be an unwilling associate of the spies of Paris, as was her unfortunate ancestress. On the other hand, he thought, she might be a willing and cunning enemy whose intention was to captivate him with her womanly charms and lure him into a trap set by the signallers. Her request that he would not follow her might have been a subterfuge to conceal her real intentions, thinking no doubt that he would follow her. Her appearance at the Cafe at the time the German also appeared, their disappearance in the same block opposite Roy's hiding place, indicated that they were co-workers. As he reasoned these points Roy realized that he had to deal with a dangerous combination and the number of enemies uncertain; too uncertain for unassisted action. If he asked the Chief for men to assist him, and Vivette was captured with the signallers, there would be no mercy and no attention paid to a claim that she was forced to remain in the signallers' company. If he worked alone and was forced to unsheath the claws of "Tiger Knight," Vivette's presence at a crucial moment might cause him to falter when to falter would mean to die.

Against his love, he weighed the possibilities and found them wanting. He decided to act alone. This decision made, he told Lucien of it and that Vivette would come again to the Cafe in the evening. During the day he would inspect the point where Vivette and the German had disappeared.

Lucien was strongly against Roy's decision to act alone but his pleading fell on deaf ears and he gave up and quoted the old saying, "Love is blind."

In the afternoon Roy sauntered down the Rue de la Minette until he came to the shop where he had crouched in the entrance. Fearing he might be watched by one of the enemies, he refrained from looking towards the opposite side of the street and feigned interest in the goods displayed in the shop window. He saw the opposite side of the street reflected in a mirror displayed for sale and was greatly surprised to see no more than a long billboard in front of a deserted building with crumbling walls.

Disappointed at his failure to find a residence where he had lost the trail of Vivette, but still cautious, he entered the shop and purchased a small picture frame and then returned to the Cafe.

Lucien knew of the deserted house and told Roy it had been vacant for many years. It had become a menace to the safety of the children of the neighborhood and the Corporation had ordered it to be boarded up, with the result that an advertising firm had

rented it for a number of years.

After counselling together, Roy and Lucien decided to arrange Roy's room for the meeting with Vivette that evening and in its seclusion Roy could endeavor, in some way, to learn where and with whom she lived. So Lucien carried down from his rooms, two ancient Louis XV. chairs, the old settee and a small table on which he placed a beautiful vase filled with his favorite flowers, white roses, thinking the while of his lost love.

Evening came, Roy sat at the table, his mind intent on the problem at hand. Of one thing, he told himself, he was certain, he would, he must conquer the mystical change that came over him when in the girl's presence, and remain his prudent self instead of instantly becoming bewilderingly enamoured with her charms. Yes, he reassured himself, he would keep cool and collected.

There came a tap at the door and in answer to Roy's "Come in!" Lucien ushered in Vivette and went out closing the door softly.

Roy stood up to greet the vision of loveliness before him. He took no note of the dainty new chapeau that so charmingly suited the queenly head, nor the charming cape of brocaded silk of other days, opened at the yoke to show the chic snowy white silk waist beneath it. All he saw was the perfect features and eyes of brown that looked into and held his own.

The tempting mouth formed into a sweet smile as Vivette courtesied low before Roy, the knavish yoke betrayed its trust and sagged away from the throat, and looking down, Roy saw the whiteness of the silken waist put to shame by the marble loveliness beneath it, and, gone beyond recall was the mighty resolve to keep cool and collected.

Returning the courtesy, Roy took the little outstretched hand in his own, kissed it and led Vivette to the table and seated her in one of the "Louis XV." chairs. Then he tenderly removed the chapeau and cape, lightly kissing the broad white forehead as he did so. Seating himself in the chair opposite Vivette he said, "It is very kind of you to come again, dear Vivette."

"You said you were lonely, my Brave, and it would be very unkind not to come, besides," and the brown pools deepened in their shade, "it would have been difficult not to have come for I am very happy here,——with you."

There was a pause, her glance lowered and there was a slight waver in her voice as she continued, "It will be Vivette who will be the lonely one, when you, my Brave, are gone away from her."

Roy made no reply to the assertion but took one of her hands in his own and caressed it as he said, "For tonight then, let us be happy together and hope for a future that will continue our happiness. We have the whole evening before us unless there occurs another bombardment to frighten your sister. Did you have far

to go last night?"

"Oh, no!" replied Vivette, "a short distance only, 'just a few blocks,' as you say in America. Sister was quite calm and her husband arrived very soon after I did. Had we known he was to return so quickly we would have had the entire evening together."

Roy was watching her face as she spoke and he failed to discern any expression other than frankness and candor. He noted the striking resemblance to the portrait in Lucien's room and thought that the one thing to make it quite identical was a white rose in the beautiful brown hair. He took one from the vase, leaned forward and tenderly wove its stem among the strands that reminded him of fine spun silk, then he so far forgot his mighty resolution that he took the rosy cheeks between his hands, drew her head slightly forward and kissed the full-lipped lips.

Vivette smiled and said, "Do you admire white roses, my Brave?"

"Very much," replied Roy.

Taking a rose from the vase, Vivette kissed it and said, "There is a legend of the ladies of my family, in which is chronicled a custom by which they became betrothed. When a maid loved a man who had declared his love for her, she plucked a rose of purest white, kissed it and then gave it to her lover who would also kiss and place it over her heart, each vowing to keep their love sacred and true so long as roses should bloom and hearts should beat." Vivette paused, Roy looking into her eyes that filled with a tender light as she blushing continued, "Will it please you, my Brave, if Vivette kisses this white rose and proffers it to you to kiss and place over a heart that will keep sacred its love for you?"

Vivette's eyes became downcast, the shapely head bowed as if in humbleness as she awaited the reply to her question.

Roy bowed his head, there was silence, the silence became cruelly prolonged as he sensed and visualized the fact that Vivette's head was erect and thrown back, that the brown pools had become shimmering black orbs tragically contrasting with blanched and drawn features. The white cheeks slowly crimsoned as the tensed nerves around the stricken heart relaxed and superheated blood again coursed through Vivette's veins. As if in a dream Roy heard a strange voice speaking and in fancy he again was an awe-stricken boy listening to the story of a wounded tigress standing at bay over her dead cub, and, as when that boy shivered and followed the words of the story, he now shivered as the strange voice said, "Your—soul—then,—can it have led to mine and destroyed the 'Hope' of my toast from the secret chamber of my heart? A descendant of Kings and Queens of France, has she given her love, her—first—kiss, to complete an idle jest? Is life to be a journey made miserable by the ever present taunting

knowledge that my heart's devotion was poured upon the desert sands of foolishness, there to die of hunger and thirst, a parched thing blown hither and yon by the acrid winds of disappointment?"

There came a pause, Roy heard the sob that struggled and became subdued as the voice continued with softer intonation, "Oh, my Brave! It cannot be true, Vivette has been too quick to condemn, too thoughtless in expecting too much, but, it seemed that we had known each other always although we had never met to look into each other's eyes and read of the love that has ever been in our hearts, there awaiting the time when we should so meet. Surely your soul did not lie when from your eyes it told mine of its love. There must be an unforeseen something that has denied the right to unity which I know should be ours. Tell me, tell me, my Brave, why you do not kiss the white rose and place it over Vivette's sorrowing heart."

Roy raised his head and faced her. She saw that in his face which made the sob uncontrollable and tears flooded her eyes. His lips tremblingly formed the words, "True, dear Vivette, to me also it seems as if for ages our souls had known each other and our hearts have loved, but, while they have been groping during the ages gone by and have not met, Fate, it seems, has in error now had them meet before the intended time, for, God pity us both, dear heart, I am married."

There came no outcry as Vivette's face blanched and she sank to the floor a huddled little heap of stricken humanity. Roy sprang up and taking her in his arms, he laid her on the old settee, an uncontrollable rush of compassion sending his blood throbbing as he kissed her hair, eyelids, pale lips and marble-like forehead, whispering the while endearing words all unheard by poor Vivette.

Then came tears, the tears of a man who had smiled when battered and broken on the "Gridiron," when every muscle ached and twitched from the gruelling the opposing eleven concentrated on "Tiger Knight," the famous "Centre" who smiled as he swooned and his team-mates carried his senseless form off the field after his touch-down had won the goal and the Pennant.

But, that was different, bodily, physical woe which left unchanged beneath his tiger frame a heart as tender as that of a child from which came the tears that fell upon the breast of the woman he had unconsciously wounded, the woman who awakened in that heart its undying love for her.

Consciousness slowly returned, Vivette's hands found and caressed the head upon her breast, then tenderly raised it until lips met lips as sacred tears welled to the eyes no longer shimmering black. With the tears came relaxation of the nerves that had tensed about the throat, and to two hearts bowed down in mutual agony from a great disappointment came a bond made eternal by

that moment of anguish.

A gentle tapping at the door caused both to spring from the settee and hurriedly to obliterate as best they could, the markings of the tempest that had swept through their lives.

At Roy's bidding Lucien entered and gave to him two envelopes, saying, "Pardon me, my good friends, but the messenger who brought the letters is waiting for a reply."

Roy saw that one of the letters was addressed in the handwriting of a friend in his home town, and in the care of his Chief's office; the other was a message from that office. He opened the latter and bade Lucien ask the messenger to wait for a reply, he would ring when it was ready.

Vivette seated herself at the table as Lucien went out, Roy opened the Chief's message and read, "There will be a bombardment by 'Bertha' tonight. You must closely watch your District and the signals from our air-fleet, red flashes if the strange flashes are seen. If you want assistance give details to the messenger delivering this message."

Roy's good judgment convinced him that he must consider all the evidence pointing to Vivette's relation to the signallers, but, he loved her and he might become the means of entrapping her with them and thus bring her to grief. His loyalty to the country he represented was unwavering and he could not place that loyalty in jeopardy by failing in his duty but he could attempt to prevent others from actually seeing Vivette at the rendezvous of the signallers.

Tearing a leaf from his "Field Message Book," he wrote to the Chief, "Please have two men report at once to Lucien Dufresne at the Cafe St. Barb. Also two men to watch the bill-board, from opposite side of street, in the third block West from Cafe. None of these men to recognize me if we meet. I will leave the Cafe with, or follow a girl, and we shall be followed by a man whom Lucien will indicate to the men for the Cafe. Instruct these men not to follow me but to arrest my follower and deliver him to you. I will join the men at the bill-board and co-operate with them if developments require it."

Fearing his leaving the room would cause Vivette to become suspicious, Roy rang the call-bell and when Lucien entered he gave him the message, saying, "An answer for the messenger, Lucien; it is unimportant but you had better read it and see that he understands its meaning as it concerns him. When he has gone you may bring us a bottle of your excellent wine."

Lucien took the message to the messenger, Roy opened and read the letter from his friend in the "Home Town" and wondered at his indifference to the news that ordinarily would have caused him to regret the happenings as related by his friend. On the con-

trary the news brought satisfaction. His friend apologetically wrote to state that his wife had told him that Mrs. Knight had become so indiscreet in her actions with an old flame that she was losing her good name and friends.

Justly or unjustly? Who shall say? Roy took for granted the news was truth, he also took the fact as an excuse, or reason, for his love for Vivette. Hoping that she would be of the same opinion and accept him as her lover, he gave her the letter to read.

Vivette read the letter, gave it back to Roy and said, "Tis hard to give you up, my Brave, and doubly hard now that I know one so unworthy stands between us, but, that she has broken her vows is not reason for you to break yours, nor are they less blinding in the sight of 'Him' before whom they were made. We may love, we may hope, but we must wait years, eternities if need be, until our souls can claim each other and still enjoy God's blessings."

At these words Roy realized that what associates Vivette may have had or now held, her heart beat true to correct faiths and principles. He thought again of the portrait and that Vivette had inherited the loyalty of the beautiful woman who lost her life in an attempt to get away from evil doers. Perhaps Vivette was also seeking an opportunity to escape from a band of traitors, of which the German was the leader and the husband of her sister.

"You are right, dear Vivette," said Roy, "It may be that we are now being tested to see if we will obey the true dictates of our hearts, and if we do but obey, we may be rewarded. You will know that my love, my life's blood, if required, are yours evermore. After we partake of the wine, we must part. I will accompany you to your home, we must then separate and leave the rest to God. Is it not so, my sweet?"

"Truly spoken, my Brave, too true, I fear, and though our souls for a time have met, the time for wedding is not yet. We will love, we will hope though our hearts do break. As you say, we may now be put to a test and I must ask you not to accompany me home, nor to follow me or seek for me after I am gone."

Words became meaningless, lips were hard pressed, an embrace that was holy and sweet, Vivette was gone, and Roy stood alone in the little room, his mind stunned and his heart aching.

Lucien rushed into the room and seizing Roy by the shoulders, shook him as in a voice intensely earnest he said, "Quick, follow her! Your men are waiting to obey your instructions. I well know the ways of the Secret Service and failure now on your part would not aid Vivette and it might be the worse for her. Ah, dear friend, Lucien knows the love that is in your heart but he wishes to protect your bewildered head, quick then, follow her!"

Roy realized the truth of Lucien's words and was soon hurry-

ing along the darkened side of Rue de la Minette.

CHAPTER IX.

The Chief's Plans

"I will leave the Cafe with, or follow a girl."

The Chief smiled as he read. Many years of experience had taught him that Life's Game as played by those who enforce the law, called for a thorough knowledge of the ways of those who disobey it. He knew the ways of the women of Paris, of the world for that matter, for from all quarters of the globe, at one time or another, women fleeing from justice had come to Paris and consequently were under the watchful eyes of the Secret Service.

So, the Chief smiled and Lucien was correct in his supposition that Roy's failure to act would not aid Vivette. As a matter of fact Roy had become an unimportant factor in the Chief's plan to capture the signallers.

The wily Chief and his Headquarters Staff, early in 1918, had in hand information regarding future events that later occurred and filled the leading journals with records of great battles fought during the colossal drive started by the Huns on March, 21st, 1918. England, France and the other allied nations stood with nervous apprehensions and the journals diplomatically warned the people that universal calamity was possible; while, as a matter of fact, many in high positions thought it quite probable.

The Germans knew that their resources were failing, their armies becoming disheartened, their non-combatant people heart-sick and weary of the war. The "War Lords" of Germany, early in 1918, gathered in council and against the dissension of the far thinking members, decided that desperate means were imperative if they were to win the war. The majority won and it was decided to stake all and make one colossal drive on the coveted prize, Paris, realizing that so long as Paris remained out of their grasp, the indomitable spirit of the French Nation and Army could not be broken.

"Paris!" How the word grated on the ears of the Huns. "Paris!" The safe haven of the great men whose brains were keeping the French Army in magnificent spirit and courage. The failure at Verdun had taught the Huns that the essentials that held solid the walls of resistance were out of their reach in Paris. Sacrificed Hun blood had flowed in torrents at Verdun, and was of no avail against that solid wall of resistance.

So, the War Lords of Germany counselled, and, remembering the bitter lesson of Verdun, they planned to confuse and paralyze if possible, the brains at Paris, at the same time hurling all avail-

able force toward that city. To perfect the plan, great guns were in the making, one was already placed and it would soon be augmented by several more. With these guns shells could be thrown into Paris and confusion would reign at a time when clear minded action was imperative for the hard driven French Armies in the field.

There had been an attempt, as in 1870, to create internal strife in Paris, but, there was no Napoleon the Third," to betray, and the Secret Service foiled the attempt, quickly bringing the few traitorous high officials face to face with the charge of treason.

By May 1st, 1918, all would be ready and the plan put into action. Then came a blunder by the Allied Army at ———, a blunder which, had it been a premeditated ruse, would have been classed as high strategy for it precipitated the Hun attack and that precipitation had much to do with the final outcome, the Armistice.

On account of the premature colossal attack, an insufficient number of "Berthas" were ready. Only by perfect direction of the fire of the one gun could the maximum of efficiency be obtained. A descendant of a French and German liaison during the war of 1870, and a few members of his family, with pronounced French characteristics, succeeded in entering Paris and with a clever signalling device established a station from which airships at a distance could relay signals to "Bertha."

Of all these things the wily old Chief was cognizant and Roy's movements from his first meeting with Vivette had been reported to him. His own Staff tired out and stale from overwork, he had conceived the plan to secure assistance from outside, knowing full well that the presence of outsiders would stimulate a spirit of rivalry that would arouse his staff to superhuman efforts. As Roy hurried along the Rue de la Minette after Lucien had roused him to it, he was indeed a very small factor in the Chief's plans.

CHAPTER X.

The Secret of Big Bertha

As he hurried along the darkened side of Rue de la Minette, Roy realized that he had lost valuable moments before Lucien had roused him to his sense of duty. He regretted his failure to subdue the emotions he had resolved to subdue, and was greatly relieved when he saw Vivette talking to a woman under the hooded light at the third corner from the Cafe. He heard the woman thank Vivette for some information given, after which she continued along the Rue de la Minette, Vivette walking along the cross street instead of in the direction of the bill-board as Roy expected her to do.

Now fully determined to trail Vivette to her home, Roy crossed the street and kept within hearing of her footsteps, and was so intent on his work he gave no thought to the woman who had apparently stopped Vivette for unimportant information but who was in fact a clever member of the Chic's staff.

Vivette's trail led Roy around the first corner and along the street parallel with the Rue de la Minette, on the opposite side of the block of the bill-board.

The sound of footsteps ceased, Roy had hurriedly and quietly reached a point opposite Vivette when the sound of a door softly closing assured him that she had entered the house opposite his position.

A few moments after hearing the door close, Roy crossed the street and indistinctly saw a row of residences, one a short distance from and a few feet lower than the sidewalk. A small spot of light near the ground attracted Roy's attention and cautiously entering the yard he sank to hands and knees and crept toward the spot of light, pausing as he heard a faint sound. Listening a few moments Roy decided that the sound came from running machinery, pulsations as from a power pump, mingled with the hum of a dynamo. Creeping to the spot of light it proved to be a small shaft of light from a hole in the heavy curtain over a basement window. Heavy steel bars guarded the window, the bars set in a concrete frame. Peering through the hole in the curtain, Roy saw which swept all doubt from his mind as to Vivette's being an agent of the signallers for there was no doubt that she had entered the house of the basement and the contents of the basement apparently held a part of the signalling apparatus.

An upright steel tank was in plain view, its gauge indicating pressure of one thousand pounds, the pump no doubt furnishing the pressure by electric force. Leading from the dome of the tank were three black tubes passing upward through the ceiling of the basement. One tube was marked with a red band around it, one with white and the third with a green one, the colors of the mysterious flashes during the first bombardment. Beneath the colored bands were three levers attached to valves in the tubes; the levers painted with colors to correspond with the bands on the tubes.

As a head appeared near the window, Roy quickly withdrew his head from it and waited until the light again showed through the hole. Again peering through the hole he saw a man with his back toward the window, a telephone receiver attached to his ears. Some message must have come over the wire for the man stepped quickly forward and pulled the lever marked red. After pulling the lever the man took the telephone apparatus from his ears and stood still for a few moments as if listening. Roy was

suddenly startled by an explosion near at hand but continued to watch the man at the levers, who turned towards the window with a satisfied smile on his coarse German features which indicated that he was content with the part he had taken in the firing of the shot.

Realizing that the bars would foil any attempt to enter the basement, that a shot at the German would warn those no doubt in the rooms above, Roy decided to attempt to gain an entrance to the upper part of the house; Vivette had recently entered, the door might be unbarred.

A small portico was dimly discernable, but creeping to it and cautiously trying the door proved barren the hope that it was unbarred. Undaunted, Roy removed his boots and with the ease of a trained athlete climbed up a column of the portico and crouched on its roof in front of a curtained double window. Faintly the sound of voices came to him, the language used being German, the words translated meant, "Over, five hundred yards, two this time, girl, one green, one white."

Roy quickly conjectured that the basement held the machinery to supply force to pneumatic tubes which discharged colored bombs, the bombs placed in tubes in the room before him; and that telephone communications from an observer on the roof or some observation post near by directed the operators of the tubes. It was evident that the shot fired after the man in the basement had pulled the red lever had struck five hundred yards over the intended mark, no doubt a building in which was an important personage, possibly Clemenceau.

As these thoughts flashed through Roy's active mind, the old sporting instinct of the "Grid" surged through his veins, and he crouched into his old "bucking" attitude, right shoulder slightly forward, muscles hard set, the window the opposing line. The room became as the "Grid," he must buck through before the girl could place the green and white bombs in the tubes.

There was a crash as the window frames were splintered and broken, glass scattered across the room, the curtain was swept aside as Roy's form hurtled into the room and with the same lightning observation as when piercing the line, he saw three tubes that passed through the fireplace, a man and girl with gas-masks on their heads, the girl turning toward him with a bomb in each hand. Through the girl's mask Roy saw brown eyes that flashed defiance as with a catlike spring his right hand clutched the throat of the man, his left the wrist of the hand that held an "automatic."

The man with the automatic was an athlete and had Roy been an ordinary man the struggle would have been brief and he the loser. As it was the man found that the human tiger who had

outimed his intention to shoot now held his throat in a vice-like grip that shut from his lungs the living air and sapped his great strength. With a desperate effort he swung the automatic up and pulled the trigger but Roy's steel wrist twitched and the bullet struck the green bomb in the girl's hand, passed through it and pierced her breast.

A blinding flash of light struck Roy's unprotected eyes, excruciating pain shot through them as all turned black and sickening fumes filled the room. The automatic fell to the floor, as the free hand of the signaller clutched and pulled at the throttling hold on his throat. The hand that left the signaller's wrist became a clinching fist that swung with sledgehammer force to the nape of his neck, and the throttling hand shoving back to meet the impact, the cord of life snapped with the spinal column, and Roy threw the limp form from him.

Freed of his opponent Roy dropped on his hands and knees, excruciating pain knifing his eyes, nauseating fumes filling his lungs. He realized that he must get out of the room quickly but his mind flooded with thoughts of the girl and his groping hands came in contact with a warm streamlet on the floor that guided him to its source, the wound in her breast.

In a semi-delirious state he took the dead girl in his arms and swayed back and forth, crooning a lullaby. Semi-delirium gave way to madness as he heard footsteps hastening up the stairs. The sound was lost in the tangle of his senses and he became a maddened tiger standing in the tall jungle grasses with his slain mate at his feet. Blinded and furious he leapt at the Secret Service man who rushed into the room and tried to stay his lithe form as he dashed about it.

The men who entered the room had been led to the signalling station by the woman who had met Vivette and then followed her, and Roy who had not been notified of their plan of action. His plunge through the window occurred at the moment they were to raid the station. They had seen the tragic end of the struggle in the upstairs room and as the occupants of the basement came out by the front door they were made prisoners by two of the Secret Service men, the remainder running upstairs to the bomb room.

Realizing that Roy's mind was unbalanced, one of the men sprang to a clinch with him, narrowly escaping the teeth that snapped at his throat, assailed and assailant falling down an open stairway and becoming separated by the fall.

Roy sprang to his feet and blindly rushed along a corridor at the foot of the stairs, staggering from side to side as he swerved against the side walls. A door at the end of the corridor was opening and Roy collided with the one who to him was responsible for the death of his mate. He sprang forward to where he sensed

the man to be, his arms enveloped him and his teeth sank to a clinch in the man's neck. With the frenzy of despair the strangling man plunged about the room in frantic efforts to clear himself of the scorching fury threatening his life. Then came a tripping trick of the "grid" and both fell against a wall that gave way precipitating them downward.

* * *

Instead of directing his men to make the German a prisoner, as requested by Roy, the Chief ordered them to trail him to cover and raid that cover with the aid of the men at the bill-board which was undoubtedly near at hand.

The men at the shop entrance had the same experience as had Roy, but their companions were close upon the track of the German and the two parties followed him across the street where he mysteriously disappeared.

Thinking their quarry had gone on or turned back on that side of the street the trappers decided to split their forces, one section to go on, another to go back. They were about to put their plan into action when they heard a struggle, apparently at the back of the bill-board. There was the sound of shuffling feet and of snarling and gasping for breath. These sounds terminated with a shock against the bill-board, a section of it giving way and falling to the pavement, bringing two men with it.

The raiders who had entered the station in the house from which the corridor led, followed Roy and arriving at the room in which the struggle took place dropped to the sidewalk through the hole in the bill-board.

The German recovered sufficiently to stand and was handcuffed to one of the Secret Service men, but Roy lay on the pavement, blood flowing from an ugly wound in his head that rendered him unconscious.

An ambulance and motor patrol were called and Roy was taken to the hospital, the Secret Service men and their prisoner following in the motor patrol.

* * *

In the signalling station the woman detective and two of the raiders found the living quarters of the signallers and secured as prisoners two women, a girl and two men. (Later found to be the remainder of the German-French Halsey family.) These were taken to Headquarters, the woman detective remaining with the dead girl until the arrival of an ambulance from the morgue.

When alone with the dead girl the woman detective removed the gas-mask and hardened though she was from experiences in her vocation of bringing women of the criminal class to justice, the beauty of the dead girl filled her heart with regret. She had seen many beautiful women of the criminal class and if there

had been the inevitable stampings of crime on the face of the dead girl during life, all trace of them on the broad forehead, around the eyes with their heavily lashed lids, had been effaced by the journey through "The Valley of Dark Shadows." The babyish mouth still smiled as if in death's long sleep she heard Roy's lullaby.

* * *

A few days after the capture of the signallers, Lucien was permitted to see Roy in his ward at the hospital. Though not dangerous, Roy's wound was a grievous one and his mind was still in a semi-delirious state. The physician in charge of the ward told Lucien he must not talk to Roy about anything to excite him, particularly on the subject of the dead girl.

Lucien had brought with him a bouquet of his favorite flowers and was saddened and disappointed when the physician said, "The roses are beautiful but I regret to inform you that your friend will not be able to appreciate their beauty for he is blind."

Sadness was depleted on Lucien's face and his kindly eyes became dimmed with unbidden tears. Seeing the effect of his words the physician said, "There is a very remote hope that Nature may, some day in a kindly mood, restore your friend's blindness. Dr. Lerondeau, our eminent oculist, has made a careful study of the case and his verdict is that Science dare not tamper with it. He is quite certain that the intensity of the flash of green light from the bomb has paralysed the nerves leading from the eye to the brain and that if it were possible for man to reproduce the flash on the eye, to minutest degree of similarity, the reaction would restore life to the paralysed nerves."

Lucien thanked the physician for his kindly explanation of the case, gave him the roses and with a sad heart entered the ward.

CHAPTER XI.

The Storm

Rain was falling and a strange chill filled the air. There were thunderless flashes of lightning at short intervals as if from the approach of an electrical storm. Hunchy's lungs were aching and his scrawny hand trembled as he wrote the words spoken by Donald.

They had steadily worked through the hours of the night, both absorbed in the tale, Donald unconscious of the fact that Hunchy was so ill that only by heroic efforts did he continue. A violent fit of coughing, however, warned him and he said, "Forgive me, 'Hunchy-Boy,' I fear my anxiety to finish the story tonight has caused me to overtax your strength."

"It is of no account, Sir," said Hunchy, and after another fit of coughing he continued, "But so much rain has fallen that the

water is entering the tent... I will make a trench along the side of the tent and by the base of the rock... That will be a change, and with a little rest after it I think we may continue."

The trench diverted the water into a tiny rivulet along the base of the rock and down the face of the cliff. As he was working Hunchy thought of his dream in which he had seen himself digging at the foot of the rock, and a strange feeling of impending evil came over him as he re-entered the tent and lay on the cot.

For some time Hunchy had realized that his illness was dangerous, and since the night he had knelt in prayer beside the road he had longed for the touch of a mother's hand, the strengthening thought of a mother's love and the courage of her presence when he met death as meet it he must. He wondered if she were alive and if she knew of his illness for he could not believe she knew how he longed for her or how his lungs were aching then or she would surely come to him. He believed in God and that He answered prayers and though his own had not been answered he felt certain they would be soon for he needed her so.

While Donald had been dictating the words of the stormy scenes at the signalling station, the elements in the vicinity of the tent seemed to accord with the story. The rain increased in volume of downpour, the wind strengthened to a near gale and violently rocked the tent, the flashes of lightning became more frequent and distant rumbles of thunder were heard.

There came a lull in the storm when the woman detective sadly admired the beauty of the dead girl but its violence increased again as Hunchy lay on the cot.

Donald became restless and ill at ease, his head and eyes were aching and an impending danger filled his mind. The tent rocked violently as a terrific gust of wind struck it and tore one of the guy pegs from the ground, the freed rope beating a wild tattoo against the canvas.

Hunchy sprang from the cot, a violent fit of coughing seized him and he cried out in agony from the intense pain that shot through his lungs.

Donald sprang blindly toward the boy, too late to prevent him from falling to the wet floor of the tent but his groping hands came in contact with the misshapen form and he stood erect with it in his arms as another gust of wind tore out the remaining pins, the freed tent enveloping the blind man and his burden, felling them to the floor.

Donald succeeded in struggling free from the folds of the tent, his arms still holding the unconscious boy, but the rain soon revived Hunchy and his intelligent mind at once conceived a plan for shelter. The great rock was close at hand and placing his mouth close to Donald's ear his voice was heard above the roar

of the storm and by following its guidance Donald struggled to the lee-side of the rock.

By the light of a lightning flash Hunchy saw that the rivulet caused by the trench had become a narrow stream undermining the rock on the side facing the cliff and he realized that it was but a matter of moments when the great rock would thunder down the cliff-side.

Donald was sitting with his back against the rock, one arm around the boy beside him. The lame and the blind, jewels of humanity in whose Christian hearts there were no complaints nor fear, for their minds were just. Their lives had drifted together at a time when union was a saving grace as from Divine hands and now that danger threatened them they calmly clung to each other and waited what might befall them. One had been maimed by those who hid from their deed but would have to face their Judge; the other maimed in the great struggle to preserve the freedom of those who believed in that Judge and knew Christianity as the soul of the world.

If Donald had longings in his heart for other than his lot he never voiced it. The only longing in the heart of Hunchy was the one he breathed in prayer to his Creator and that longing was soon to be gratified and the boy's misery ended.

The storm buffeted the rock, and the small stream continued to undermine the foundations that had stood the storms of ages to become shaken by the hand of a crippled child.

Flashes of lightning lit up the wood-road and Hunchy's mind became filled with memories of his dream and in fancy he could see the owl sitting on the branch of the elm. In fancy also he heard the hum of the automobile coming along the road as in his dream. He turned his head to see if phantom lights were there and was startled by the sight of genuine light swiftly approaching. The limb of the elm was lit up by a flash of lightning and the boy's gaze became a spell-bound stare at the place where the owl had been plainly seen on the limb. The temporary picture filmed on his brain faded and all again became black to the eye but to Hunchy's inner self had come a message from the unknown that the answer to his prayer was near at hand. The rock trembled, Hunchy's nerves tensed and Donald's arm tightened about his waist as the lights of the automobile slowly brought the elm into view.

A blinding flash of lightning rent the blackness of the night, a greenish streak of vivid glare zig-zagged past Donald and Hunchy, and there came a deafening crash as the bolt struck the elm. The arching limb was hurled to the road and the speeding automobile dashed into it and became a blazing wreck of twisted mechanism to be further demolished by the great rock that thun-

dered down the cliff.

Above the roar of the storm Hunchy heard the shriek of a woman and at the same time Donald clutched him to shout in his face the words, "Hunchy! 'Hunchy-Boy!' The flash of the bomb is reproduced and I can see! Oh God! I can see!"

The joyous words of Donald were lost to Hunchy for he heard nothing but the woman's shriek and sensed nothing but the knowledge that came to him as an invisible hand dragged him from Donald's arms and upheld him whilst he rushed down the cliffside to a form pinned beneath the limb of the elm beside the road; and Hunchy knew her to be his mother. He frantically tore at the limb and the owl beneath it crushed on the breast of Doris, but his feeble efforts were of no avail.

Donald arrived at the roadside and with a mighty effort of his great strength the limb was cast aside and Hunchy clutched the dead owl and threw it far from him as he knelt beside the one who in life despised him.

The flames from the burning car illumined the weird scene and Donald saw a man crushed among the wreckage and recognized the defiler of his home, Rex Williams. He looked at Hunchy and saw a thin stream of blood flowing from his lip as the poor misshapen form wavered and sank on the breast that should have suckled it, and on which, to Donald's horrified gaze there appeared in tracings of vivid red the form of an owl.* And so they died, the one rewarded for his faith and prayers for he had been called to the Land where all are as Angels of Heaven, the other punished for her sins without repentance and that she might be known as evil of heart, the rare phenomenon of lightning photography had branded her, as was her forsaken son, with the brand of the owl.

(*Through memories of "Electrical Talks" at school when a boy, the author conceived the idea of using the fact of "Lightning Photography" in this story. The particular instance in mind was that of a farmer who, with his team of horses took refuge beneath an oak tree in a field during a thunder storm. Lightning struck the tree and killed the farmer and one of the horses. Those who found the dead man were astonished to see on his breast a perfect photograph of the oak tree.)

CHAPTER XII.

At The Cafe St. Barb.

The lights of the Rue de la Minette were no longer hooded nor their globes tinted blue. The residents of the Section were clad in gala attire and thronged the street. Merry laughter from gleeful children filled the air and a little girl waved the Tri-colour

as she was held aloft by a brave who had been one of those at Verdun to shout, "They shall not pass!"

The demolition of the Signalling Station in the Section of the Rue de la Minette had practically ended the work of "Bertha," and then had come the blessed day of the signing of "The Armistice."

At the Cafe St. Barb the patrons were gathered to talk of the Armistice and to tell of the brave deeds done by some relative or friend, some to return laden with honors won, many gone to their reward leaving behind glorious and sweet memories that filled the heart and moistened the eye. Tears and smiles in plenty were there but in every heart lived the spirit that had won for the sons and daughters of France an undying fame as the bravest of the brave.

Sprightly of step and bright of eye was our old friend Lucien Dufresne. To him it seemed like other days, days before the sombre clouds of war descended to obscure the sunshine of "Sunny France." He had now two assistants, rosy cheeked and red lippped daughters of old friends who were not coming home.

Lucien had much to make him happy. France was safe from the Hun, and one whom he loved and cherished for memories of the long ago had been found "Not Guilty" of a charge of treason, through his pleading and evidence dating back to the days of Julien Montreuil, Pierre Sonrel and Joseph Leduc.

In addition to the other things to make him happy and renew his youth Lucien was saving a honey-sweet morsel and the time to partake of it was near at hand. His periodical glance at the Café entrance and the old cuckoo-clock behind the bar indicated that he expected the arrival of guests.

As the hands of the clock reached five to ten Lucien removed his white apron and stationed himself at the entrance. His face filled with almost childish expectancy as the cuckoo of the old clock struggled through ten announcements that he was there in the same old place. At five past ten the look of expectancy changed to one of gladness as framed in the doorway appeared another old friend, Captain Roy R. Knight.

No mere handshake of friend and friend was there for Lucien's loving heart turned him into a child and he threw his arms around one whom circumstances had made dearer than friend. Tears of joy glistened on his wrinkled cheeks as he embraced Roy and arm in arm walked with him to the stairway leading to his quarters and there bidding him wait in the room of the portrait.

Roy ascended the stairs, his mind on the time when he first saw the portrait so like the one he had so dearly loved, and a feeling akin to reverence filled his heart as he opened the door. Then his hand trembled on the latch as he saw a girl kneeling before the portrait, her head bowed as if in prayer. The shapely head was

crowned with a wealth of brown hair and as she stood up Roy could not restrain the joyful cry that surged to his lips. At the cry the girl turned, the brown eyes dilated with surprise, and her lips and cheeks went white then became crimson as she extended her arms and cried. "My Brave, Oh! My Brave!"

Roy sprang forward and took Vivette in his arms and this time there was none to say them nay for she who stood between was in her grave with an owl in vivid red stamped on her breast.

Lucien came softly up the stairs, saw the lovers on bended knees before the portrait, closed the door gently and returned to the Cafe.

And there they are living today, at Cafe St. Barb; Vivette, Donald and Lucien; Vivette's loyal heart knowing only one regret, that her twin sister had died a traitor to France; Donald's only regret the one that "Hunchy-Boy" could not be with him, and Lucien none at all for the burrow of the mole would become a happy home and the day would come when children would play about his knees while the happy parents were busy with the patrons of his gift to them, The Cafe St. Barb, Rue de la Minette,



